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To: Economic and Community Development Committee

Date: January 11, 2008

From: Bob Dean, Principal Regional Planner

Re: Vision Development

At the November 2007 meeting of the Economic and Community Development committee, committee members expressed an interest in the comments received on the vision statements through other committees and the online survey. In the attached document, staff have compiled the comments received on the vision statements concerning economic competitiveness for the committee's information. Please note that comments through the online survey were collected on the original version of the vision statements; the survey, once posted, was not modified, to allow responses to be gathered consistently.

A larger document that contains all of the comments received on all vision statements has been prepared, but due to its length (approximately 50 pages) it has not been included. Staff will distribute draft copies of this document (along with some significant caveats about its use) to committee members who express interest.

Staff will be identifying areas of disagreement, in terms of conflicting changes suggested to the vision statements, and will be presenting these to the Planning Coordinating Committee for feedback on March 12. The working committees are expected to play a role at their March and April meetings in the resolution of conflicts or disagreements that emerge.

ACTION REQUESTED: Information

In 2040, the economy of northeastern Illinois will enjoy a global status that ensures superior job opportunities for all socio-economic groups.

Economic Competitiveness

The economic strengths of downtown Chicago and suburban employment centers will complement each
other, with the entire region benefiting from its international recognition as a diversified center of
commerce. Our reputation as the "city that works" and the "city of broad shoulders" will continue to be
relevant, attracting employers in search of skilled workforces in a variety of industries and other fields to
the region.

ECD committee, 10/30/07

Suggest bullet change to: The economic strengths of our interdependent region will complement each other, with the entire region benefiting from its international recognition as a diversified center of commerce and its location at the center of the Midwest.

ECD committee, 11/27/07

Going beyond the region as the center of the Midwest to the center of the country or continent would improve the suggested bullet above.

Survey results (as of 1/4/08):

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good average bad rank (of 54 statements) 70% 21% 9% 15
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Comments from survey:

what about those parts of the Chicago metro area that are underserved by employment? I don't remember seeing this bullet before.

Recommended minor revision to item 1: The economic strengths of downtown Chicago and suburban employment centers will complement each other, with the entire region benefiting from its international recognition as a diversified center of commerce. Chicago's reputation as the "city that works" and the "city of broad shoulders" will continue to be relevant, attracting employers in search of skilled workforces in a variety of industries and other fields to the region.

The first statement is lovely. There is so much competition though and still a mentality of further away from urban is better. Maybe gas prices and traffic jams will help people want to stop adding rings to the sprawl tree. How do we find a vision statement that encourages people to do so. I'm sorry. I know this is well-intentioned and well-meaning, but I can't help but feel that it sounds like a lot of fluff void of substance that will be quickly dispatched to the recycling pile (hopefully people do recycle).

There are many urban centers besides Chicago in the region that can be highlighted for their contributions to the region.

We need to change the moniker to "the region that works" and "the region of big shoulders".

Long-term economic benefits will be created through planning and implementation that makes efficient use
of resources and enhances our environment, public health, social equity, cultural amenities, education
systems, and physical infrastructure.

Survey results (as of 1/4/08):

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good average bad rank (of 54 statements)
62% 26% 11% 29
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Comments from survey:

"Efficient use of resources"; should prioritize using existing infrastructure and resources and our economic development should seek to exploit that which we already have (rail in particular).

Suggest bullet change to: "Long-term economic benefits will be created through planning and implementation that makes efficient use of resources and enhances our environment, public health, social equity, ATTAINABLE HOUSING, cultural amenities, education systems, and physical infrastructure."

Delete the words ";...planning and implementation"; It is vague and makes more sense without it. too general

assumes a cause & effect.

keep this bullet, eliminate the rest, but consider adding "and recognizes the economic contribution of our farmland, suburban and downtown Chicago employment centers."

Long term economic benefits should include our integrated transportation system. Investment should include a comment on our education systems.

Long-term economic benefits... vague.

• Investments in the region's human capital will occur through workforce development programs or other training that prepares students and workers to excel in the diversified jobs of the future.

Survey results (as of 1/4/08):

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good average bad rank (of 54 statements) 61% 29% 10% 32
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• Our farmland, which is among the most fertile in the nation, will be valued as an important regional resource because of the economic contribution it makes, the food and fuel it produces, the scenic value it provides, and the soil and water it protects.

ECD committee, 10/30/07

Consider moving this statement to the energy theme, because it does not fit well within economic development.

Survey results (as of 1/4/08):

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good average bad rank (of 54 statements)
62% 24% 14% 39
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Comments from survey:

Farm land is disappearing rapidly. If we dont stop this..there will be none

I'm not sure that valuing farmland for these things will result in its preservation as farmland.

Glad to see the question on farmland, but I have found that most chicagoans ignore it and think all the beautiful fields are boring. Also there is no policy that protects farmland. Look at Kane COunty. If a developer wants to build, they just annex to a village or city. THe farmer, who knows he is in the right place, sells out and moves to Florida.

How can this valuable farm land be preserved and utilized when developments and suburban sprawls continue at a rapid pace?

Our farmland should also include advancements in technology which enhance our production.

Need better farm land protection especially for Class A soils.

Put farmland preservation first or second. It's way more fundamental than the blobby stuff about workforce development programs

Reality: our farmland is NOT among the "most fertile in the nation";. Ag protection is a laudible side effct to containing urban sprawl but don't BS its benefits. It's other contributions to the region's economy, food supply, etc. are negligible in the larger perspective.

Some additional comment pn portecting tillable soils should be emphasized. People generally overlook the destruction of quality soils as a sustaining strategy and economic strategy.

The economic boat has sailed (to China) and is not coming back. Farmland continues to be lost to development. Chemically dependent farming practices deplete the soils and contaminate the food we eat. GM crops pose an unknown risk to health. (At least one child has already died from eating GM products which contained genetically spliced enzymes which had similar effects as peanuts, to which she was allergic).

The regions farmland will be used in the manner the land owner sees fit. If selling it for development has more value than scenery then it will be developed.

Open space should be specifically mentioned as a possible contributor to the economic health of the region Farmers should be encouraged to "grow local and sell local" and move away from monoculture like corn and soy beans. We could feed our own millions by food we grow right here at home saving untold amounts of energy wasted in transportation and refrigeration and increasing jobs, reducing soil loss through the use of sustainable farming methods rather than factory farming techniques, and improving the diets of our increasingly overweight population.

There is more farm-land in southern illinois and in iowa and kansas and other farming states...farmers are selling their land for development so they can make millions.

Farmland needs to be recognized as an economic tool -- not greenspace. Agriculture is successful for its production resources.

Overall comments

ECD committee, 10/30/07

Add new bullet: The region will be recognized as a center of innovation across all disciplines, and will encourage creativity and entrepreneurial activity.

ECD committee, 11/27/07

Add more language about the region's global status, possible referring to its location at the heartland of America, and its role as a nexus of global activity.

Also, language concerning good jobs, which is missing from this section, should be added.

Overall comments from survey:

...in a perfect world...., but it remains far from perfect from what I see.

Economic benefits evolve from a diversifed, well managed economic system -- not esoteric land use planning values! The workforce needs diverse skills in communication, science and math -- jobs evolve from the diverse economic system.

Economic competitiveness seems more appropriate as on over-arching goal that will be achieved if the objectives in the various areas (education, environment, health, etc.) are met.

I believe another bullet should emphasize innovative industrial processes, creative use and reuse of a variety of energy sources, and [policies not to bueden the economic producers with heavy taxes and regulations.

I would include that we, as a region, would also pour tremendous resources into becoming global leaders in high-growth, fair-paying business sectors that will fuel high job growth; high standards of living; and high migration to Chicagoloand. We would also expand Chicago's role as the transporation hub of the nation and the Midwest -- in part by building state-of-the-art high speed rail lines that better connect us to the rest of the Midwest and nation. Further, if supersonic air travel is the future, we must find environmentally acceptable and sustainable ways to construct the world's best such airport (if it must be constructed in Lake Michicagan, then we must find a way to do it while fully protecting her and the ecosystem that depends upon her).

Increasing taxes, transportation congestion and higher than average cost-of-living and politics will eventually become a deterant to economic growth in our area.

Need more specific capital improvement goals.

This are has nothing even remotely approaching a healthy balance between downtown Chicago and unbridled

suburban sprawl. Accordingly, these goals are ridiculously unrealistic. Is this supposed to be a plan or a wish list.

This was a bad section. Needs a lot of work!

This will also have to be done by another agency and not municipal ones. Good goal, but I think we'll need to change the mindset of developers and municipalities.

too vague include transportation of people and products to emphasize below

Transportation within the region needs to be improved for this to happen.

Wheres the beef?

You have to address taxes and the public sector's refusal to reduce expenses especially employee health care costs.